

# BUILDING BONUS POINTS

By Ron Wilson



*Nearly 10,000 hunters applied for mule deer buck licenses in 2005.*

RON WILSON

The system by which the North Dakota Game and Fish Department awards licenses to deer hunters has been around long enough that some hunters don't know of any other method.

In 1993, the Department switched from a random lottery system used to issue deer, pronghorn and turkey licenses, to today's bonus point system. The move was made to reduce the number of people who went years without drawing their first license choice.

"Basically, the problem was in the mule deer units where some people would go eight to nine years without getting a license," said Jerry Gulke, North Dakota Game and Fish Department information technology coordinator. "We'd get a lot of calls from people who didn't get a license who thought it was time that they should."

While the bonus point system did increase the odds of drawing a preferred license for an applicant who had been unsuccessful for a long time, Gulke said the process is still random. "There is still a luck of the draw element," he said. "We were just trying to balance that out – trying to get the tag a hunter wanted within a reasonable amount of time."

Phone calls from the unlucky still cross Gulke's desk, but they're fewer in number today than they once were. "What I hear from the general public is that they are more satisfied with the bonus point system," he said. "With bonus points, we're giving them something to help change their luck."

A decade after the bonus point system was introduced, the Department changed the way it evaluates bonus points to weight the lottery. "We started squaring the points because we were not seeing things happen as quickly as we would like," Gulke said. "We decided that after four years of a person not getting their first license choice, we wanted to move them through the system as fast as we could."

For instance, when you have accumulated four or more points, the number of additional chances you have at being drawn is now determined by cubing your bonus points. So, when you have four points, you will be in the drawing 64 additional times (you'd be in the drawing just 17 times under the previous system), 125 times if you have five points, and so on.

In terms of changes that affected the 2005 drawings, there were none, Gulke said, but the Game and Fish Department did make some rule changes that will affect future drawings. You can now sit out one year and still maintain your bonus points, but you aren't earning any, either. And if you don't apply two years in a row, you will lose any accumulated bonus points.

"This change was made to give people more flexibility in the process," Gulke said. "I'm not sure how this will affect future drawings. It will increase the number of bonus points in the system, so I think we should expect the length of time you have to wait between licenses to become longer."

Again, the number of licenses – 145,600 licenses, as compared to 145,250 in 2004 – made available to deer hunters in 2005 was a record. This is the fourth year running that more than 100,000 deer gun licenses were made available.

And again, the majority, or 85 percent, of hunters in 2005 applied for a buck license as their first choice, even though the number of buck licenses available declined for the second year in a row. "It used to be in the 50-60 percent range," Gulke said. "So many people apply for a buck as their first choice, I think, because they know they can get a doe license in a later drawing. In some hunting units, they know they can get as many doe licenses as they want."

This trend of many hunters applying for a buck as their first choice likely got rolling years ago when additional doe licenses became available in some hunting units. "But the change was gradual and really became noticeable about three or four years ago," Gulke said.

More people today are playing the deer lottery than, say, in the early 1980s. So, not only are a greater percentage applying for a buck license as their first choice, there's more people in total doing so. "It's easy to forget how tough it was at one point in North Dakota to get any sort of deer license," Gulke said. "In 1980, we had only 41,000 deer licenses available in the state."

Or nearly 105,000 fewer than in 2005.

"It's amazing how things have changed," Gulke said.

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## 2005 LOTTERY RESULTS

- 145,600 deer licenses – another record – up from 145,250 licenses in 2004.
- 3,400 mule deer buck licenses available, up from 3,100 in 2004. People who applied for a mule deer buck license jumped from 9,445 in 2004 to 9,626 in 2005.
- 77,826 applicants for deer licenses (not including gratis, nonresident, youth or muzzle-loader), an increase from 75,709 in 2004.
- 67,485 applicants applied for a buck license as their first choice, but less than half of the available licenses, 51,850, were buck licenses.
- A muzzle-loader buck license was the most difficult to draw, with more than five times more applicants than licenses. A mule deer buck license in Unit 4C was a close second, also with more than five times more applicants than licenses.
- The number of pronghorn licenses available jumped significantly – 9,564 applications for 5,715 licenses. The chance to draw a pronghorn license was better in 2005 than it had been in a long time, but in some units it was still a long shot, unless you applied for a doe/kid license.
- Several of the fall turkey units had licenses remaining after the drawing. These licenses were issued on a first-come, first-served basis and some hunters were able to get several.
- The number of spring turkey licenses increased from 5,145 in 2004 to 6,165 in 2005. Applicants for a spring turkey license dropped from 9,848 in 2004 to 8,877 in 2005.

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2005 deer drawing.

LICENSE TYPE		POINTS								OVERALL	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
1 A	Any Buck	96.9	100	100							97.1
1 B	Any Doe	100	100								100
2A A	Any Buck	38.4	74.9	83	100	100					50.3
2A B	Any Doe	97.7	100	100							97.9
2B AE	Any Buck Early	83.6	99.6	100			100				85.2
2B AL	Any Buck Late	82.5	100	100	100						83.3
2B BE	Any Doe Early	98.4	100			100					98.4
2B BL	Any Doe Late	98.4	100								98.4
2C A	Any Buck	51.8	87.7	100	100				100		60.6
2C B	Any Doe	98	100	100							98.2
2D A	Any Buck	100	100	100		100					100
2D B	Any Doe	100	100								100
2E A	Any Buck	52.5	88.8	100	100		100				62.4
2E B	Any Doe	96	94.7								95.9
2F1A	Any Buck	92.9	98.8	100							93.1
2F1B	Any Doe	99.6	100								99.6
2F2A	Any Buck	52.9	87	94.7	100				100		62.2
2F2B	Any Doe	97.3	96.6								97.3
2G A	Any Buck	71.7	97.9	100							76.4
2G B	Any Doe	100	100								100
2G1A	Any Buck	63.1	95.8	96.6	100	100	100				70
2G1B	Any Doe	97.8	96.4								97.8
2G2A	Any Buck	91.3	99	100			100				91.8
2G2B	Any Doe	99.2	100	100							99.2
2H A	Any Buck	49.8	87.7	97.7	100						60.9
2H B	Any Doe	96	100								96.2
2I A	Any Buck	40.5	78.1	92.4	100	100					51.6
2I B	Any Doe	95.4	95.5	100							95.4
2J1A	Any Buck	11.2	27.7	51.1	54.5	100	100				24.3
2J1B	Any Doe	94.6	89.5	100	100						94.1
2J2A	Any Buck	90.5	100	100	100						91.1
2J2B	Any Doe	99.3	100								99.3
2K1A	Any Buck	20.8	53.7	72.7	82.6	100					36.3
2K1B	Any Doe	95.6	100	100							96.1
2K2A	Any Buck	32.8	69.5	83.7	92.3						46.1
2K2B	Any Doe	94.3	93.5	50							94
2L A	Any Buck	100	100	100	100	100					100
2L B	Any Doe	100									100
3A1A	Any Buck	54	92.1	94.7			100				61.6
3A1B	Any Doe	95.5	100								95.6
3A2A	Any Buck	68.1	97.5	100	100						73.6
3A2B	Any Doe	99	100	100							99.1
3A3A	Any Buck	34.6	69.8	89.7	88.9	100	100				48.2
3A3B	Any Doe	96.4	94.3	100							96.2
3A4A	Any Buck	58.4	90.7	95.9	100						66.6
3A4B	Any Doe	97.6	100	100							97.8
3B1C	WT Buck	27.1	69.1	73.2	94.1	100					43.7
3B1D	WT Doe	92.5	100	100							93.3
3B1E	MD Buck	27.9	71.4	83.3	87.5	100					46.5
3B1F	MD Doe	96.4	100	100							96.7
3B1I		90.6	100								90.7
3B2C	WT Buck	42.1	87	100	100						56.7
3B2D	WT Doe	97.6	100								97.7
3B2E	MD BUCK	35.9	73.1	80.8	100	100	100				51.9
3B2F	MD Doe	83.3	100								85
3B2I		100									100
3B3A	Any Buck	7.7	31.2	39.5	44.4	100					19.9
3B3B	Any Doe	88.8	100	100							90.1
3B3C	WT Buck	99.5	100	100		100	100	100			99.5
3B3D	WT Doe	100	100	100							100
3C AE	Any Buck Early	12.2	26.8	40	28.6	100					19.6
3C AL	Any Buck Late	6.5	30.8	38.9	12.5	100					18.5

					POINTS					
LICENSE TYPE	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	OVERALL
3C BE Any Doe Early	87.5	100								88
3C BL Any Doe Late	90.2	100	100							90.9
3C CE WT Buck Early	91.9	98	100	100						92.8
3C CL WT Buck Late	73.3	97.4	100	100	100					78.1
3C DE WT Doe Early	98.6	100		100						98.6
3C DL WT Doe Late	97.8	100	100							97.9
3D1A Any Buck	27.6	58.3	62.9	94.1	100		100			42.1
3D1B Any Doe	93.6	100								93.9
3D1C WT Buck	98.6	100	100	100						98.8
3D1D WT Doe	100	100								100
3D2A Any Buck	9.9	25.6	39.5	50	100	100				22.4
3D2B Any Doe	93.7	100	66.7							93.1
3D2C WT Buck	89.8	100	100	100						92.8
3D2D WT Doe	100	100								100
3E1A Any Buck	12.7	30.9	60.2	53.6	100	100		100		27.6
3E1B Any Doe	97.7	60	85.7							95
3E1C WT Buck	73.5	96.2	100	100	100					80.1
3E1D WT Doe	92.9	100	100							94.1
3E2A Any Buck	11.6	34	53.2	65.5	100					26
3E2B Any Doe	98.1	93.8	100	100						97.8
3E2C WT Buck	100	100	100	100						100
3E2D WT Doe	100									100
3F1A Any Buck	11.3	38.6	52.2	63.6	100					25.3
3F1B Any Doe	97.8	100	100							98
3F1C WT Buck	100	100	100							100
3F1D WT Doe	100									100
3F2A Any Buck	7.7	31.6	42.9	55.6	100	100				21.8
3F2B Any Doe	96.3	100	100							96.6
3F2C WT Buck	98.1	100	100	100	100					98.4
3F2D WT Doe	88.9	100								90
4A C WT Buck	30.6	74.4	90		100					43.7
4A D WT Doe	100	100								100
4A E MD Buck	10.8	30.3	36.5	65.2	97.6	100			100	27
4A F MD Doe	95.1	100	100	100						96
4A I	93.8									93.8
4B C WT Buck	66.3	100	100	100						71.8
4B E MD Buck	7.7	22.3	27.7	45.3	100	100	100			24.2
4B F MD Doe	95.2	100	50							94.7
4B I	100									100
4C C WT Buck	98.4	100	66.7	100		100				97.4
4C D WT Doe	100		100							100
4C E MD Buck	2.9	6.8	19	23.3	89.8	97.8	100	100	100	18.8
4C F MD Doe	95.7	100	100		100					96
4C I	59.5									59.5
4D C WT Buck	100	100	100	100						100
4D D WT Doe	100	100								100
4D E MD Buck	10.9	0.6	44.9	56	100	100	100	100	100	24.1
4D F MD Doe	96.6	100	100	100	100					96.9
4D I	87.3									87.3
4E C WT Buck	100	100	100	100						100
4E D WT Doe	100									100
4E E MD Buck	24.4	57.3	60.9	75	100	100				40.5
4E F MD Doe	100	75								98
4E I	100									100
4F C WT Buck	100	100								100
4F D WT Doe	100	100								100
4F E MD Buck	62.9	89.2	100							66.7
4F F MD Doe	100									100
4F I	100									100
MUZC WT Buck	6.1	16.1	25.6	33.9	99.1	100				16.1
MUZD WT Doe	100	100	100	100						100

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2005 Pronghorn drawing.

LICENSE TYPE		POINTS								OVERALL	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
01AA	Any Pronghorn	1.5	4.9	7.8	13.3	64.3	97.2	93.8		100	13.4
01AD	Doe/kid	100	100	100		100	100				100
01DA	Any Pronghorn	2.2	8.3	15.1	17.1	76.1	100	100	100		16
01DD	Doe/kid	100	100	100							100
02AA	Any Pronghorn	5.7	18.8	23.2	26.7	100	100				18.4
02AD	Doe/kid	100									100
02BA	Any Pronghorn	0.8	7.4	21.4	14.3	90	100	100			14.5
02BD	Doe/kid	100									100
03AA	Any Pronghorn	13.4	23.4	32	55.6	57.1	100	100			24.7
03BA	Any Pronghorn	2.6	6	10.3	7	71.4	100	100	100		12.5
03BD	Doe/kid	100	100			100					100
04AAE	Any Pronghorn Early	4.8	15.9	13.5	31.8	95.7	100	100	100	100	18.1
04AAL	Any Pronghorn Late	30.8	48.7	82.9	80.6	100					46.8
04ADE	Doe/kid Early	95.7	100		100	100					95.9
04ADL	Doe/kid Late	96.6		100	100						96.8
04CA	Any Pronghorn	23.6	26	58.3	76.9	100	100	100			34.6
04CD	Doe/kid	100									88.9
05AA	Any Pronghorn	8	1.3	45.3	36	100	100	100			17.1
05AD	Doe/kid	100	100								100
06AA	Any Pronghorn	5.8	1.2	25.4	56	100	100	100			12.5
06AD	Doe/kid	100	100	100							100
07AA	Any Pronghorn	11.3	19.2	40	38.5	100	100	100			18.9
07AD	Doe/kid	87.5	100								88.9
08AA	Any Pronghorn	6.3	23.5	37.5	27.8	100	100				21.1
08AD	Doe/kid	100	100								100
09AA	Any Pronghorn	4	17.2	12.5	16.7	100					11.1
09CA	Any Pronghorn	0.5	3	4.9	14.3	70	83.3	100			6.1
10AA	Any Pronghorn	1.3	19.7	13.3	16.7	88.9	100	100			14.4
11AA	Any Pronghorn	2.9	15.9	15.1		100	100				8.8
11AD	Doe/kid	100	100	100		100					100

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Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2005 fall turkey drawing.

LICENSE TYPE	POINTS								OVERALL	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
02 F	47	84.7	88.9							60
03 F	100	100	100							100
04 F	100									100
06 F	100									100
10 F	100	100								100
13 F	100	100								100
15 F	100	100								100
17 F	100	100								100
18 F	100	100	100							100
19 F	100	100								100
21 F	100									100
25 F	100	100								100
27 F	100	100	100							100
30 F	100	100								100
31 F	100	100								100
34 F	100	100		100						100
37 F	15.9	43	61.1	100						27.2
40 F	94.8									94.8
41 F	81	100	100		100					85.7
44 F	100	100	100							100
45 F	100									100
47 F	59.4	96.8								71
50 F	12.9	30	60	57.1						22
51 F	100									100
53 F	92.2									92.2
70 F	60.8	95.7	100	100						68.6
98 F	98.9	100	100							99
99 F	100	100								100
R F	45.9	88.4	50	100						58.5

Percent of applicants who received their first choice of license in the 2005 spring turkey drawing.

LICENSE TYPE	POINTS								OVERALL
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
02 S	39.1	71.4	88.2	100					49.3
03 S	22.5	44.1	90.9	100					40.1
04 S	65.1	100							68.6
06 S	100	100							100
10 S	55.1	89.2	100	100					68.3
13 S	73.4	100	100						74.9
15 S	100	100							100
17 S	45.7	81.3	100						50.6
18 S	61.3	100	100	100					72.4
19 S	100	100							100
21 S	100		100						100
25 S	64.4	90.8	88.9	100					71.5
27 S	91	100	100	100					92
30 S	70	96.3	100	100					75.7
31 S	100								100
34 S	60.2	88.6	100	100	100				66.9
37 S	15.2	37.9	33.3	63.2	100				26
40 S	36.5	75	100	100	100				49.6
41 S	41.4	54	80	100	100				49.5
44 S	100		100						100
45 S	100	100							100
47 S	83.5	100	100	100					86.3
50 S	19.8	46.7	60.5	63.6	100	100			33.5
51 S	86.6	100	100						89.2
53 S	100	100	100						100
70 S	32	57	78.3	100	100				43.2
98 S	46.2	78.3	100	80					54.7
99 S	83.5	95.1	100	100	100				86.2
R S	28.2	52.1	78.6	80	100				35

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